

Mwani language

The **Mwani language** (*Kimwani* [ki 'mwani]) is a Bantu language spoken on the coast of the Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique, including the Quirimbas Islands. Although it shares high lexical similarity (60%) with Swahili, it is not intelligible with it. It is spoken by around 120,000 people (including 20,000 who use it as their second language). Speakers of *Kimwani* also use Portuguese, (the official language of Mozambique), Swahili and Makhuwa language. Kiwibo, the dialect of the Island of Ibo is the prestige dialect. *Kimwani* (sometimes spelled as *Quimuane*) is also called *Mwani* (sometimes spelled as: *Mwane*, *Muane*) and *Ibo*. According to Anthony P. Grant:^[6] *Kimwani* of northern Mozambique appears to be the result of imperfect shift towards Swahili several centuries ago by speakers of Makonde, and Arends et al. suggest it might turn out to be a Makonde–Swahili mixed language.^[7]

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Name

The Name "Kimwani" comes from the word "Mwani", meaning "beach". The prefix "Ki" means the language of, so "Kimwani" literally means "language of the beach".

Sounds

Kimwani (similar to Swahili) is unusual among sub-Saharan languages in having lost the feature of lexical tone (with the exception of some verbal paradigms where its use is optional). It does not have the penultimate stress typical of Swahili; it has movable pitch accent. Labialization of consonants (indicated by a [w] following the consonant) and palatalization of r (ry; [rj]) are frequent. Nasalization of vowels occurs only before a nasal consonant n followed by a consonant.

Vowels

Mwani	
<i>Kimwani</i>	
Native to	Mozambique ^[1]
Native speakers	100,000 (2006) ^[2] 2nd language: 20,000 ^[3]
Language family	<p>Niger–Congo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Atlantic–Congo ▪ Benue–Congo ▪ Bantoid ▪ Bantu ▪ Northeast Coast Bantu ▪ Sabaki ▪ Swahili ▪ Mwani
Writing system	Latin
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	mw
Glottolog	mwan1247 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mwan1247) ^[4]
Guthrie code	G.403 ^[5]

Kimwani has five vowel phonemes: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/, that is: its vowels are close to those of Spanish and Latin. It does not have a distinction of closed and open mid vowels typical of Portuguese, French or Italian.

The pronunciation of the phoneme /i/ stands between International Phonetic Alphabet [i] and [e]. Vowels are never reduced, regardless of stress. The vowels are pronounced as follows:

- /a/ is pronounced like the "a" in *start*
- /e/ is pronounced like the "e" in *bed*
- /i/ is pronounced like the "y" in *happy*
- /o/ is pronounced like the "o" in *or*
- /u/ is pronounced like the "u" in *Susan*.

Kimwani has no diphthongs; in vowel combinations, each vowel is pronounced separately.

Consonants

Two symbols in a table cell denote the voiceless and voiced consonant, respectively.

Consonants of Kimwani^[8]

	<u>Labial</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
<u>Nasal</u>	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
<u>Plosives and affricates</u>	p, b	t, d	tʃ, dʒ	k, g	
<u>Fricatives</u>	f, v	s, z	ʃ		h
<u>Trill</u>		r			
<u>Approximants</u>	w	l	j		

Orthography

Kimwani can be spelled in three ways: using orthography similar to Swahili, using a slightly modified spelling system used in Mozambique schools or using a Portuguese-based spelling. Here are the differences:

Kimwani spelling systems differences

	Swahili language spelling	Modified spelling	Portuguese spelling	Translation
/tʃ/	chala	cala	tchala	finger
/dʒ/	juwa	juwa	djua	Sun
/k/	kitabu	kitabu	quitabo	book
/ŋ/	ng'ombe	ng'ombe	ngombe	cow
/ɲ/	nyoka	nyoka	nhoca	snake
/s/	fisi	fisi	fissi	hyena
/z/	meza	meza	mesa	table
/ʃ/	kushanga	kushanga	cuxanga	to admire
/wl/	wakati	wakati	uacate	time
/j/	kipya	kipya	quípia	new
/l/	sukili	sukili	suquile	sugar
/u/	ufu	ufu	ufo	flour

Numbers

moja (1), mbili (2), natu (3), n'né (4), tano (5)

sita (6), saba (7), nane (8), kenda (9)

kumi (10), kumi na moja (11), kumi na mbili (12)

Ishirini (20), thelathini (30), arubaini (40), hamsini (50)

sitini (60), sabini (70), themanini (80), tisini (90)

mia (100), mia mbili (200)

Elfu (1000) elfu mbili (2000)

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